

## REMARKS

Applicants would initially like to thank the Examiner for the allowance of claims 9, 11-13, and 24, and the indication of allowable subject matter in claims 15, 17, 18, and 20-22.

Claims 19, 23, 25, and 27-30 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102 as anticipated by Nakai et al. (“Nakai”). Claim 26 has been rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103 as obvious over Nakai in view of Ishiharada. Claims 15 and 25 have been rejected for informalities. Claim 25 has been objected to. Claims 9, 11-13, and 24 have been allowed. Claims 15, 17, 18, and 20-22 have been indicated as containing allowable subject matter.

Claims 9, 11-13, 15, and 17-36 are currently pending in the application. Claims 15 and 25 have been amended. Claims 31-36 have been added.

Claim 19 has been rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102 as anticipated by Nakai. Applicants respectfully traverse the rejection.

Claim 19 recites “a metal plating applied to at least a portion of the second region.” In Nakai, the exposed fiber cores (equated to the second region) are inserted into a metal tube. No metal is disclosed as being plated to the exposed second region, as recited in claim 23.<sup>1</sup>

Additionally, claim 19 recites “an epoxy seal being molded about the metal plating of at least some of the optical fibers in the second region.” In Nakai, the epoxy is injected between the fibers and the metal tube. The epoxy is thus molded about the fiber, but is not molded about the metal plating as recited in claim 19.

---

<sup>1</sup> Applicants note that the Office Action implies that the coating on the fiber optics constitutes a metal plating. Such implication is inconsistent with claim 19, which recites that at least some of the optical fibers have substantially no coating in the second region; if the coating equated to metal plating, then it has been removed and there is no disclosure of it being reapplied within the second region.

Claim 19 accordingly recites at least two limitations that are neither taught nor suggested by the applied art. Withdrawal of the rejection of claim 19 and allowance of the same is therefore respectfully requested.

Claims 23, 25, and 27-30, which depend from claim 19, have also been rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102 as anticipated by Nakai. These dependent claims are patentably distinct over the applied art for at least the reasons discussed with respect to claim 19. Withdrawal of the rejection of these dependent claims and allowance of the same are therefore requested.

Claim 26 has been rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103 as obvious over Nakai in view of Ishiharada for its teachings of certain particular metals in a gas sheath. The teachings of Ishiharada fail to teach or suggest the above two limitations that are lacking from Nakai. Claim 26 is therefore patentably distinct over the applied art for at least the reasons discussed with respect to claim 19. Withdrawal of the rejection and allowance of claim 26 are therefore respectfully requested.

Claims 15 and 25 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §112 for informalities. Claim 25 was additionally objected to for an informality. Claims 15 and 25 have been amended to address the same. Withdrawal of the rejection and objection for informalities are therefore respectfully requested.

Claims 31-36 have been added to further recite that which Applicants regard as their invention. New independent claim 33 contains the same two limitations discussed above from claim 19, which are not found in the applied art and are patentably distinct therefrom for at least the reasons discussed with respect to claim 19. Favorable consideration of new claims 31-36 is therefore requested.

In view of the foregoing, the application is believed to be in condition for allowance, and a notice to that effect is earnestly solicited.

The Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge any missing or insufficient fee(s) or credit any overpayment, to Deposit Account No. 19-4293 (Case No. 12492.0276).

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Scott D. Watkins", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Date: July 31, 2006

Scott D. Watkins  
Registration No. 36,715  
Steptoe & Johnson, LLP  
1330 Connecticut Avenue, N.W.  
Washington, DC 20036  
Tel: (202) 429-8056;  
Fax: (202) 429-3902